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RELIGIOUS RITUAL

There will always be doubt as to whether the old religious ceremonies on Easter Island were of the same complexity and importance as those of other Polynesian islands. Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 69), who stayed on the island for a long time, never saw any ceremony connected with the ahu or any other sacred place and never saw the natives in an act of religious worship. If the Orongo feasts were performed in honor of Makemake, as I believe, they are the only evidence of the god cult about which data are available. However, the ceremonies at Orongo occurred only once a year and did not represent the ordinary method of worship.

Offerings and Sacrifices to the Gods

The gods, especially Makemake, received offerings of food and tapa cloths, presented by the people through their priests. Before every meal an offering of food was made to some god, generally to Makemake and Haua, occasionally to some lesser god. According to the legend I collected, this custom was introduced by Haua and Makemake themselves (p. 313). Estella (79, pp. 29-30) records the following tale which may be a variant of the myth I obtained or it may be the result of Estella's combined ignorance and fancy:

> Atua Makemake took a man of the island who was called Peku-angoohu. As this man did not offer to the god any *umu* (earth oven) or any sacrifice, he transferred him to a far away island named Motu Matiro-hiva to punish him for his lack of religiousness. There he was obliged to look after the fish left by the tide on the shore.
>
> When the punished man did not come back after several months, his father became very sad. A man of the island went in search of Atua Makemake. As he knew that the god had gone to the island of Motu Matiro-hiva, he set out for this land. Instead of finding the god he found Peku-angoohu. "What are you doing?" he asked. "I am undergoing the pain imposed on me by Makemake." "I am looking for him. What is the reason for your punishment?" "It is because I did not offer him *umu*." "You are stupid, why do you not prepare an earth oven full of chickens, bananas, sweet potatoes, and the other things you have? You will offer them to Atua Makemake and he will have pity on you."
>
> Peku-angoohu did as he had been told and the god accepted his offering. He appeared suddenly and spoke in a friendly way with the two men. He forgave the punished man. The other one, who was good, asked the god to teach him how to make houses and implements and requested Makemake to give him horses, cows, sheep, and other things. Atua Makemake agreed to his request and the two happy men went back to Easter Island.
>
> The father of Peku-angoohu was greatly pleased to see his son again and they lived peacefully together never forgetting to make an offering of *umu* to the god.

Human Sacrifices

Under very serious circumstances, probably in times of emergency or on the occasion of an important ceremony, Makemake asked for human sacrifices. The victims were children kidnapped by the priests, prisoners, or persons who had incurred the displeasure of the king. (See 87, p. 31; 215, p. 473.)

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Easter Islanders who wanted to increase their poultry so that they might celebrate a feast (*koro*) had the *ariki-paka* make a charm which contributed to the rapid increase of chickens. When invited to eat chicken meat, the priests received the rump (*huahua*) of the bird.

BIRD CULT

Until the second half of the nineteenth century the annual feast of the bird man (*tangata-manu*), held at Orongo, was extremely important to Easter Islanders. The rites performed were not only connected with the cult of the greatest god of the island, Makemake, but were endowed with special social significance, since ideas of prestige and economic privileges were closely associated with these ceremonies. The ostensible purpose of the ceremony was to obtain the first egg of the *manu-tara* (*Sterna hirundo*, sooty tern), the quest for which was entrusted to servants (*hopu*). The chief whose servant discovered the first egg received the envied title of bird-man (*tangata-manu*). This title, surrounded with tapus, brought to its holder and to members of his lineage certain material advantages and vast moral and religious benefits.

The far-reaching significance of the bird cult is illustrated by the extensive remains at Orongo, one of the most interesting archaeological sites on the island, and by the frequent use of bird and bird-man motifs in all forms of Easter Island art—tablets, wooden images, petroglyphs. The importance of birds in Easter Island culture and the use of birds as the basis for a religious cult are undoubtedly due to the poverty of the island fauna in which birds were the only conspicuous creatures. Not only were they the most interesting living thing next to man, but they contributed thousands of eggs for food.

The bird cult did not die out until about 50 years ago, long after the introduction of Christianity. Almost all recent visitors to Easter Island have studied the bird-man cult. Consequently there is a mass of contradictory material. Routledge, realizing the essential part this cult must have played in the ancient religious and social life, devoted much attention to it, and interviewed the last man who had participated in the ceremonies at Orongo. My information was gained mostly from Tepano, who was well acquainted with some details because his uncle was one of the last bird-men. The information he gave substantiates that gathered by Routledge and adds a few more details.

Orongo

The ceremonies and feasts connected with the bird cult were performed at Orongo, on the slopes of Rano-kao at the southwest point of the island. The village of Orongo lies on the narrow ridge separating the sea from the crater lake. It was temporarily occupied at the time of the yearly feast and deserted the rest of the year.

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Islands of the Bird Cult

The picturesque site of Orongo was chosen because of its position opposite the islands Motu-nui, Motu-iti, and Motu-kaukau. Two of the islets are almost inaccessible, and it is possible to land on Motu-nui only when the sea is calm. Hundreds of thousands of birds make temporary abode on these solitary rocks, some of them coming for the winter and others for the summer. (See list of birds, p. 18.) The *manu-tara* (sooty tern), whose eggs were the principal objects of the *tangata-manu* feast, arrive from August to October. When I visited the island in November, it was covered with birds nesting on rocks and in the high grasses. Frightened by our arrival, they took flight, swirling around our heads in dense clouds. The natives who had accompanied us gathered in one hour more than a hundred eggs which they ate on the spot.

On Motu-nui there are several caves which were occupied by the *hopu* (servants) while they awaited the coming of the *manu-tara* and while they searched for the first eggs.

On the wall of the largest of these caves, which is about 6.5 meters long by 4 meters wide and 2 meters high, there is an incised image of an *ao* (dance paddle) which is 2.4 meters long. With Dr. Lavachery, I discovered another image which figures a *rei-miro* (breastplate) ending in two cocks' heads.

Besides this large cave, the entrance of which is visible, there are other smaller caves with narrow mouths. On the walls of one cave were some incised figures, among them that of a bird now in the Trocadero Museum. From the mouth of the bird protrudes a flame-like design, composed of many lines. This appears to be a conventional representation of the deafening cries of the birds. Another drawing, also taken from this cave and preserved in the Museum du Cinquantenaire at Brussels, shows a man with long ears.

The most spectacular of these caves is entered by a narrow passage descending at a sharp angle. Routledge (194, p. 275) saw five skeletons there, but I noticed only two; they were untouched and lying on a bed of boulders. Over them hung a big red head, carved in the hard mud of the ceiling, more than 500 mm. long and crossed in the lower part by horizontal lines. It resembled the god with big eyes figured in many petroglyphs on the island. Two small heads were seen in the same cave. A double-headed bird, carved in relief, had been partially destroyed by natives or by visitors hunting for curios. Fortunately another bird in the same cave was reproduced by Routledge (194, pl. 17). Neither Routledge nor anyone in our party was able to get information about the unusual presence of skeletons in this cave, which was probably not intended for a burial vault. The ornaments which covered its walls preclude such a possibility. These carvings are coated with red ochre and stand out from a white background which seemed to me to be natural, although Routledge believed it had been painted.

Another of the caves on the islet was believed by Routledge (194, p. 275) to have been transformed into a sepulchre, but the bones must have been thrown out, since I found none there. A statue presented to the British Museum by Routledge is said to have been removed from one of these caves and to have been called Titahanga-o-te-henua. It is purported to have marked the boundary between Tuu and Hotu-iti.

Mataveri

The third place closely associated with the ceremonies of the bird cult was Mataveri on the northern slope of Rano-kao, where now stands the house

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of the English manager of the company which owns the island. At Mataveri the people who were to participate in the ceremony gathered for some time (Routledge says for a month) and spent their leisure time feasting and dancing. A big hut was built there, and great uprights were planted like columns in the ground. One of them is still standing, another has fallen which has one side carved like the back of a big image. Other such blocks and a huge basin stand in the Residence garden.

Feast of the Bird-man

The feast began in the austral spring (probably September or October), when *manu-tara* were nesting on Mou-nui. Only dominant, victorious tribes took part in the quest for the egg and the attendant ceremonies, for the privileges at stake were too important to be vested in an inferior or defeated group (*mata-kio*). The victorious warriors (*mata-toa*) who were entitled to live at Mataveri while awaiting the coming of the *manu-tara* were frequently referred to under the collective name of *ao* (*ka oho Mataveri ki te ao*; go to Mataveri to the dominant group), which means victory and consequently designates those who had obtained power over others through a successful military expedition. The word, in this sense, probably has no connection with the dance paddle, *ao*.

Routledge (194, p. 258) says that "only those belonging to the clan in the ascendancy for the time being could enter on the quest." That is, there was only one tribe who, for political reasons, had the privilege of performing the rites of the bird cult. The envied position was retained by this group for years, unless it yielded its rights to another friendly tribe. The jealousy provoked by this monopoly must have led to quarrels and even war. (See 194, p. 258.) However, it seems to me more likely that several powerful lineages participated in the egg race and the ceremonies. Roussel (190) clearly mentions a rivalry between several parties, and Routledge (194, p. 258) says that sometimes "clans" took part in the quest.

Routledge (194, p. 259) states that the preliminaries for the feast began almost a year before the discovery of the egg. She probably confused the time sequence and placed at the beginning activities at Mataveri which I believe occurred at the end of the feast. I was told that the feast began no earlier than January and perhaps even later. Possibly those attending the feast stopped at Mataveri on their way to Orongo. As my theory is supported only by my own reconstruction I wil retain Routledge's scheme in the following description.

The people who were to take lading parts in the festivities left their villages to reside in Mataveri with thir wives and children. There they lived in a big house or several houses, which were not destroyed until the second half of the nineteenth century. The long months of waiting were made joyous

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by a continuous round of festivities and banquets. Possibly a certain significance is to be attached to the statement by Gana (86, p. 33) that while the people were gathered at Orongo "the men and the women appeared entirely naked in public dances, making indecent and immoral gestures." If this is true we may suppose that erotic dances were performed at Orongo as in the Marquesas, in order to favor fertility in nature.

The name of Mataveri is associated in the minds of the natives with cannibal meals. Both Routledge and I were told that the *mata-toa* (warriors) who gathered at Mataveri, both before and after the principal feast at Orongo, were then more prone than at any other time to indulge in human flesh. Quite near Mataveri is a cave called Cave-of-the-cannibal, Ana-kai-tangata, where tradition says that the victims were devoured. On the vault of this cave are painted birds and Routledge saw the sketch, now crumbled away, of a European boat.

In January (according to Routledge, July) all or part of the people who had been in Mataveri ascended to the stone village of Orongo by way of a special path which still exists and is called "the road of the ao." Generally the contestants in the race were named by priests (*ivi-atua*) who had dreamed that a certain *mata-toa* would become a bird-man (*tangata-manu*). After the race a disappointed contestant might accuse the priest who had named him as bird-man of being a liar or he might hopefully defer his prophesied victory to a later year or to one of his descendants.

Generally the actual search for the first *manu-tara* egg was entrusted to men called *hopu* who supposedly acted as servants of the contestants. Usually each competitor sent only one *hopu*. However, instances are recorded of one *hopu* serving two employers and of one contender having two *hopu*. Both Routledge and Tepano say that there might be more than one bird-man. Probably there was one supreme bird-man and several supernumeraries whose *hopu* had found eggs after the first one. In the race held four years before the custom was abandoned, four tribes took part and there were ten winners. Two *hopu* had two employers each, while three contestants hunted their own eggs, one acting also for another man. Routledge regards this as a sign of decadence. However, so little is known about the cult that it is dangerous to speak of degenerate forms in reference to it. Tepano was quite firm in his statement that the competitors themselves sometimes looked for the eggs. The early missionaries and travelers who described the egg race were of the opinion that the candidates to the title acted on their own account and that it was their courage or their skill which was rewarded. Thomson's (215, p. 483) version may have some validity:

> The race for the distinguished honor of bearing the first egg was an occasion of intense excitement. The contestants were held in check at Orongo until the auspicious moment arrived, and the scramble commenced at the word "go" pronounced by the king,

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who was about the only able-bodied man on the island who did not participate. It was decidedly a go-as-you-please-race, every man selecting his route to the sea by the circuitous paths or directly over the face of the cliff, and many fatal falls are recorded as the result. The swim to Motu Kau Kau was a trifling matter, the chief difficulty being to return with an egg unbroken through the general scramble. 796

The *hopu* swam over to the island, supported by big bundles of reeds used as floats (*pora*). Carefully wrapped in the mats of the *pora* were provisions of all sorts which were "still hot when they landed on Motu-nui." To cross the 2 kilometers between the main island and Motu-nui was not an easy sport. The waves are generally high and often sharks haunt these waters. 796 481

On the islet, the *hopu* were provided with food which was cooked by the people gathered at Orongo and taken over to the island by servants who used *pora* for transportation. When the weather was stormy communications between Motu-nui and the main island ceased. Those who were provident dried banana and sweet potato skins in the sun to be eaten in case of emergency. 796 [261 251]

Whilst the *hopu* waited on the islet for the first *manu-tara* eggs, their masters and the members of the *ao* performed various rites at Orongo to propitiate the gods. Dances were held in front of the houses, and chants were sung for the gods by the *rongorongo* who occupied the houses at the end of the stone village, near the carved rocks. The dual political division of the island was reflected even in the abodes of the narrators during the feast. Those from Hotu-iti dwelt in the western group of houses, and those from Tuu in the houses to the east. Sometimes the king went to Mataveri to call on the people gathered there, but he never ascended to Orongo. At least that was the custom adopted by Nga-ara who was probably following an old tradition. Offerings and prayers were addressed to the gods Makemake and Haua who had created the birds and established the cult in honor of themselves. Makemake designated the man to be *tangata-manu* and thus incarnate the god. Routledge (194, p. 260) mentions *vie* Hoa and *vie* Kenatea among the deities who were worshipped at Orongo. [619] [782]

Tepano stated repeatedly that at Orongo there were many old men (*korohua*) who were sorcerers; they recited charms for the success of the competitors and had long talks with the gods, who entered some of the houses of Orongo. When a god was thought to be in a house, only the priest could enter and inquire about the contestant's chances of winning. While the priests tried to make the deities favorable toward those who resorted to them (*hatu o te manu kia Haua, kia kia Makemake*), the young people were busy making earth ovens, the contents of which they distributed lavishly among the priests or sent to the *hopu* on the island. Some of the food was set apart by the *ivi-atua* and consecrated to the gods with the traditional formula, "Ka too ma Haua, ma Makemake . . . " Tepano's reference to the sharp voices of the priests when they spoke to the gods is probably a personal memory of some [887] [793]

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individual who assisted at the feast. At night the people at Orongo retired into the houses of their respective lineages. During the feast, if a group wanted to remain for a while in the house of the god, they had to put a circlet on the head of the statue Hoa-haka-nana-ia (p. 298) which stood outside, and the people who had been there earlier left. (This rite as it is recorded here is meaningless.)

As September approached, the *hopu* on the islet paid increasing attention to the birds and spent all day reciting prayers or incantations. When they had reason to think that the birds had begun to lay eggs, they rushed out from the caves to look for them.

The *hopu* whose master was not designated by Makemake would step on an egg without seeing it, whereas the *hopu* of the candidate selected by the gods would see it immediately. As soon as he discovered the egg, he jumped on a stony prominence called Rangi-te-manu and from there he shouted, "So and so, puoko te varu (shave your head)." This announcement was heard by a man who kept watch in a cave below Orongo, called Haka-rongo-manu (Listening-for-the-birds).

Before returning to Orongo the unsuccessful *hopu* waited for the winner lest the crossing of the channel be unsafe. The winning *hopu* put his egg in a little basket which he dipped into the sea, and then tied to his forehead. The man with the sacred egg was always the last to leave the island. Being blessed by the gods and having with him an object overflowing with mana, he had little to fear from sharks, and his supernatural power gave protection to his fellow contestants. The magical properties of the egg, together with the protection of the gods, made the winning *hopu's* swimming not only safe but extremely fast.

At Orongo the *hopu* handed the egg to his employer who had in the meantime shaved his hair, his brows, and his eyelashes. A priest (Routledge says a *rongorongo*, which is very unlikely) tied a strand of red tape and a piece of sandalwood (*ngaungau*) around the bird-man's arm which was tapu from having received the egg. The priest recited a special incantation during the ceremony.

The relatives of the bird-man sang and danced (*hokohoko*), celebrating their victory. The bird-man held the egg on the palm of his hand wherein lay a piece of tapa (*haka epa*). He walked down the slopes of Rano-kao toward Mataveri, dancing and chanting. Tepano still remembered the tune of this chant, but unfortunately he did not know the words. It sounded like tremulous weeping, and my informant said that the bird-man cried and "behaved like a god." He gave me the description as it had been given by the old men. "The men had dancing paddles (*rapa*) in their hands and they jumped with them. They wore on their heads wigs of women's hair, tapa headdresses or wreaths of *toro-miro* leaves. Tufts of women's hair hung be-

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hind. Everybody else carried *oo* (dance paddles) and they shook their bodies." 796 792

Early information gathered at Tahiti by Admiral de Lapelin (129, p. 110) describes the bird-man as he came down from Orongo after the finding of the egg:

> The man who was lucky enough to find the first egg or the first small bird hurried to show it to all the other competitors. They shaved his head, his face was painted in red and black; all those who had found eggs after he did constituted his retinue. These warriors distributed eggs to those they wanted to keep near the king who was elected for a year, without any lack of regard for the king who reigned by right of primogeniture. 796 792 302 643
>
> Each with an egg on his hand and the new majesty with a bird hanging on his shoulders walked about in the surrounding places singing and dancing. The new king designated two or three persons who must be sacrificed for the prosperity of his reign. It was the choice of the victims which caused a war among the tribes every year.

The new bird-man went to Rano-raraku where he remained in seclusion in a house whose foundations may be seen at the foot of the volcano, close to the giant statues. Other houses on the slope of Rano-raraku and near ahu Tonga-riki were designated to Routledge as having been used by bird-men. More likely, although no proof may be produced for or against it, seems the tradition that there were houses for *tangata-manu* in most of the larger settlements which had important image ahus. Routledge (192, p. 351) considers this multiplicity of *tangata-manu* houses to be a modern development. She was also told that the bird-men of the western tribes took up residence at Anakena. 792

The *manu-tara* egg was emptied after three days, filled with tapa, and hung up inside the bird-man's house. It was credited with great magical virtues and the natives believed that it made the food supply more abundant. The deep-sea fishing season opened with the coming of the first *manu-tara*. Routledge (194, p. 262) says that " . . . till their arrival all fish living in twenty or thirty fathoms were considered poisonous." 792 778

The seclusion of the bird-man lasted one year, during which he was under strict tapu, especially during the first five months. Routledge (194, p. 248) says that he could not leave the house, "sleeping all the day, only coming out to sit in the shade." He was not allowed to bathe himself or to eat food other than that which was prepared for him in a special oven. His wife might go to Rano-raraku, but she could not "enter his house and he hers, on pain of death." The *tangata-manu* was attended by an *ivi-atua*, who, according to Routledge, was not an ordinary priest, but a poor relative of the hero. This attendant or priest remained in the same hut which was divided in half by a partition. He prepared the food for the bird-man and himself, cooking his own in a separate oven. Clark (52, p. 145) heard that the bird-man did not wash or cut his hair or nails during his year of seclusion. 792 784

Thomson (215, p. 482), Routledge (194, p. 264), and I were all told that gifts of food were brought to the *tangata-manu*. He was entitled to the first 792 688

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Rokunga[17], to his nephew. Tepano was born during the year Utupiro, thus named by a bird-man called Pua-arahoa, who chose the name Utupiro for himself and for the year. Tepano's account confirms Routledge's statement (194, p. 260) as to the nomination of the bird-man which she says "might be taken up at once or not for many years; if not used by the original nominee, it might descend to his son or grandson." 792 173

Tangata-manu were buried in a special ahu called Orohie which was not far from the house where the bird-men were secluded. The ahu, like all of this section of Rano-raraku, is in poor condition now. It was (194, p. 264) "a low rough wall built into the mountain, the ground above it being levelled and paved." When a *tangata-manu* died, five cocks were tied to each of his feet. People of all the tribes came with cocks, and *tangata-manu* of other years were present at the feast. They stood a little apart, not mingling freely with the other people, and untied the cocks attached to the dead man's feet. Presents of cocks were received by the son of the *tangata-manu*, but he could not eat them. The cocks which had touched the ground of the ahu where his father lay were especially tapu. 766 792

The tapus which surrounded the bird-man extended to the *hopu*. During the year following his discovery of the egg he could either go to Orohie or reside in his own house where he was obliged to live in a corner separated from the other people by a partition. The hand which touched the egg was so sacred that he could not use it in eating. His sacredness was contagious to his wife and his children who were also secluded and were not permitted to join other people. 792 784 778

The bird-man relinquished his retreat after one year, and the new bird-man took his place. He either concealed the old egg in a cranny of Rano-raraku, threw it into the sea, or preserved it to be buried with him. No tapus upon a *tangata-manu* after his seclusion have been recorded. 792 778

According to Routledge (192, p. 349) there was another search for eggs, several weeks after the first quest, entrusted to the *ao* who had settled at Mataveri. They went to Motu-nui to get the young *manu-tara* known as *piu* and to gather many eggs. These were put in baskets, tied to the foreheads of the swimmers, and thus brought to the land. They were taken around the island and, according to one account, as far as Orohie. Routledge (192, p. 349) writes: 796

> It was not until the *piu* had been obtained that it was permissible to eat the eggs, the period of commencement being known as "Toro", and they were then consumed by the Mata-kio only, not by the Mata-toa; the first two or three eggs, it was explained, were given to the god, to eat them would prove fatal. [262]
>
> Some of the young *manu-tara* were kept in confinement till they were full grown, when a piece of red tapa was tied around the wing and leg and they were told: "Ka oho ki te hiva." "Go to the world outside;" there was no objection to eating the young birds.

[17] Rokunga, according to Routledge (192, p. 351), was the name of the last bird-man. The last feast was performed at Orongo in 1866 or 1867. To gain prestige, Tepano has probably applied to himself what he heard about the past. [554]

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It is impossible to determine whether this rite was performed by a tribe who had not yet participated in the race or whether it was independent of the bird cult. De Lapelin (129, p. 110, note 2) speaks of the gathering of young birds as well as of eggs. Probably this second egg hunt occurred only occasionally or else was undertaken for economic reasons.

In the preceding descriptions of the bird cult, significant contradictions appear in the data brought forward by early sources and the evidence gathered by Routledge. Although Routledge must take precedence over other authorities because of her systematic investigation of the ceremony, the testimonies of missionaries, who were eyewitnesses and the victims of the events, cannot be treated as irrelevant. It is possible to reconcile all these discrepancies and to reconstruct in a harmonious scheme all the rites of the bird cult.

Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 67) and Ollivier (165, vol. 39, p. 256) name September as the month when the feast was at its height and the competition in progress. Gana (86, p. 32), on the authority of Roussel, places the feast at the time when the birds were nesting, and Thomson (215, p. 483) names July. The election of the bird-man occurred in September when the conflicts between the groups started. The duration of the feast was, according to Eyraud, two months; according to Gana, one lunar month; and according to Thomson, only a short period in July. There is no contemporary evidence for such a long span of time as that given by Routledge, and it is unlikely than an entire population should move for a whole year to a place where there were no fields and little comfort.

For the feast, I should propose the following schema: In July, probably until the end of the month, groups gathered at Mataveri and Orongo and performed the first ceremonies to procure the favor of the gods in the race. In August the *hopu* went to Motu-nui and stayed there awaiting the coming of the first *manu-tara*. In September the first eggs were found, the bird-man of the year selected, and great feasts held at Orongo. Jealousy or excesses committed by the bird-man's group brought about strife on the island. Later the bird-man, under a heavy tapu, retired for his year's seclusion.

The importance of the bird cult cannot be denied in the face of the Orongo ruins and the numerous images of bird-men carved on the rocks. Traditions, testimonies of early missionaries, and records of travelers confirm the exceptional importance of the cult ritual as well as the social order built on this annual competition. Williamson (228, vol. 1, p. 406) suggests that the contest was, at least at an early period, for the secular kingship. His chief argument is the trifling privileges of the bird-man as compared with the complex emotionalism of the feast. He is inclined to identify the bird-man with those kings who exercised a temporary power and were dismissed or killed when their physical force decreased. The function of the bird-man was also similar to that of the divinized kings, symbolizing vegetation or the god of vegetation,

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who reigned without taking part in the civilian government. Such an explanation would be quite natural if there were in Polynesia any other example of an institution of this kind, but in no Polynesian community is there the slightest hint of such a custom.

One should keep in mind that the feast was in honor of Makemake and Haua, the first being a bird-god. He probably derived this attribute from Tane with whom he has some characteristics in common. Images of a being with a bird head and a human body, sometimes holding an egg in his hand, are representations of the god Makemake. It follows that the bird-man was an incarnation of the god. Probably, according to the Polynesian way of thinking, he was the receptacle of the god. The race would thus have no other purpose than to give Makemake an opportunity to designate the man into whose body he wished to enter. I suppose that the bird-man, because of his highly sacred character, was authorized to plunder and to avail himself of the goods of other natives. His seclusion may well have been a result of the strong tapu attached to him as a consequence of his contact with the god. Even explained in terms of Polynesian culture, the institution of the bird-man recalls that of the temporary kings, principally those of Siam. Possibly the evolution of culture traits has created a cultural complex superficially akin to others, probably having an entirely different basis.

Comparisons with Other Polynesian Cults

The complex of the bird cult as it is reconstructed from second-hand information has no parallel in the rest of Polynesia. Of course, incarnation of gods in animals is a fundamental character of Polynesian religions, but nowhere else were there open competitions resulting in the election of a sacred man. Figures of a man with a bird's head occur elsewhere only on the island of Lanai in the Hawaiian group. There Emory found petroglyphs representing a man with a bird head, and suggests (75, p. 120) that it is not by chance that the bank on which these petroglyphs are carved is called Kaneapua, the name of a bird-man, and that a heiau near the bank bears the name Halulu, a mythical bird. The common motif of Maori art called *manaia* has been described as a fantastic being with a bird head. Actually it is probably a derivative of the traditional representation of the human figure.

TREATMENT OF DISEASE

Disease was treated by priests (*ivi-atua*) and was probably connected with religion as in Mangareva. Eyraud (81, vol. 38, p. 70) says that the natives merely removed the sick from their huts during the day and returned them at night. My inquiries contradict Eyraud's hasty statement; it is likely that magic beliefs and scientific conceptions were closely intermingled with practical treatments.

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532 291 represented any of the numerous feather headdresses of pre-Christian days. There was, however, a hat very commonly worn made of native grass, which has survived and is the almost universal wear at the present time. The general shape of this hat is not dissimilar to that of the images, except that it has a circular brim where the hats of the images have none, but project, as has been said, over the forehead. It may of course point to an adaptation in the stone or to an evolution in the shape of the hat; the point which is interesting is that in living memory such hats had a knob on the top similar to that of the crowns of the images.

532 304 In regard to the design on the back of the images we were more successful; it was definitely recognized as a tattoo design remembered by the older men.

The form of the ears elicited the most interesting information. We have seen that the images represent a race who artificially enlarged the lobe of the ear, a custom which is of course common in many parts of the world. The early voyagers noted that it prevailed among the Easter Islanders of their day. In reply to inquiries on this head it was said that women had the ears enlarged till the coming of Christianity, and two still survived with pierced ears, but such a custom amongst men was unheard of. By persistent search, however, an old leper was found who recalled the fact that the father of his foster-father had had such ears. He had asked as a child for the reason, receiving the illuminating reply that "the old people had their ears like that." Subsequently two other old men were remembered who had had long ears. The custom must therefore have been abandoned by the men towards the end of the eighteenth century. It is noteworthy that this makes the change contemporaneous with the visits of Gonzales, Cook, and La Perouse, and it seems highly probable that this is more than a coincidence. We know that the natives were 609 996 greatly impressed by the white men, and that they were strongly imitative. In riding round the island we saw the remains of a very large house. 996 "That," we were told, "was where they praised the gods." "What gods?" we naturally asked. "The white men who came in ships" was the unexpected answer. The worship took the form of erecting a crude model of the deck of a European ship both in these special houses and out of doors. Masts were put up. A captain was chosen who strode about and gave orders; the others represented the crew and imitated the various actions incidental to working a ship. The clothes obtained from ships were kept as stage properties for such representations. This custom was in full swing within living memory, and was traced back as far as the grandfathers of the present old men. It will of course be remembered that Cook was similarly taken for a god in the Sandwich Islands.

532 We have seen firstly what tradition has to tell us about the images; and secondly what can be gleaned as to their history from the images themselves. There is still another class of evidence. Attention has been drawn to the fact that Easter Island has produced *not* only gigantic stone

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days, and then died. It was not essential to life to have a soul, but you could not really get on comfortably without it. No knowledge survives of any belief or ideas with regard to a future state. The spirit, it was said, appeared occasionally for five or ten years after a man's death and then vanished.

Pan in the shape of tatane is by no means dead. Not only do such beings haunt the crater of Rano Raraku, but tales are told of weird apparitions at dusk which vanish mysteriously into space.

There were no priests, but certain men, known as "koromaké," practised spells which would secure the death of an enemy, and there was also the class known as "ivi-atua," which included both men and women. The most important of these ivi-atua, of whom it was said there might be perhaps ten in the island, held commune with the aku-aku, others were able to prophesy, and could foresee the whereabouts of fish or turtle, while some had the gift of seeing hidden things, and would demand contributions from a secreted store of bananas or potatoes, in a way which was very disconcerting to the owner.

There was practically only one religious function of a general nature; it was very popular and had a surprising origin. Attention was attracted on the south coast by a particularly long stoep of rounded pebbles measuring 139 feet, and obviously connected with a thatched house now disappeared. That, our guides said in answer to a question, "is a haré-a-té-atua, where they praised the gods." "What gods?" "The men who came from far away in ships. They saw they had pink cheeks, and they said they were gods." The early voyagers, for the cult went back at least three generations, were therefore taken for deities in the same way as Cook was at Hawaii. The simplest form of this celebration took place on long mounds of earth known as "miro-o-orne," or earth-ships, of which there are several in the island, one of them with a small mound near it to represent a boat. Here the natives used to gather together and act the part of a European crew, one taking the lead and giving orders to the others. A more formal ceremony was held in a large house. This had three doors on each side by which the singers entered, who were up to a hundred in number, and ranged themselves in lines within; in one house, of which a diagram was drawn, a deep hole was dug in the middle, at the

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796 bottom of which was a gourd covered with a stone to act as a drum. On the top of this a man danced, being hidden out of sight in [534] the hole.

In other cases, two, or perhaps three, boats were constructed inside the house, the masts of which went through the roof; these boats were manned with crews clad in the garments of European sailors, the gifts from passing vessels being kept as [533] stage properties. Fresh music was composed for every occasion, and in one song, which was quoted, much reference is made to the "red face of the captain from over the seas." The position of chief performer was one of great honour, being analogous, on a glorified scale, to the leader of a cotillon of our own day. It was stated by an old man that his great-grandfather had so acted, and even the words sung were still remembered. Te Haha, a Miru (fig. 83), gave us to understand that he had been a great social success in his youth, and counted up three koro, and seven haré-até-atua at which he had been present. As he was a handsome old man, and was connected with the court of the chief Ngaara, his pride of recollection was very probably justified. Juan, mixing up, no doubt, recollections of a later date, gave a vivid representation on one of these spots of the pseudo-captain striding about and using very strong language, while he called upon the engineer to "make more smoke so that the ship should go fast."

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The Miru Clan

614 789 On the border-line, between religion and magic, wherever, if anywhere, that line exists, was the position of the clan known as the Miru. Members of this group had, in the opinion of the islanders, the supernatural and valuable gift of being able to increase all food supplies, especially that of chickens, and this power was particularly in evidence after death. It has been known that certain skulls from Easter are marked with designs, such as the outline of [532] a fish; these are crania of the Miru, and called "puoko-moa," or fowl-heads, because they had, in particular, the quality of making hens lay eggs (fig. 96). Hotu, the Miru, whose mother, it may be remembered, was the victim of a cannibal feast, made his [523] own skull an heirloom, as "it was so extremely good for chickens," that he did not wish it to go out of the family. His son gave it

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evolved the tablets there are two points worth noticing. Firstly, the Islanders are distinctly clever with their hands and fond of representing forms. Setting aside the large images, the carving of the small wooden ones is very good, and the accuracy of the tablet designs is wonderful. Then they have real enjoyment in reciting categories of words; for example, in recounting folk-tales, opportunity was always gleefully taken of any mention of feasting to go through the whole of the food products of the island. In the same way, if a hero went from one locality to another, the name of every place *en route* would be rolled out without any further object than the mere pleasure of giving a string of names. This form of recitation appears to affect them æsthetically, and the mere continuation of sound to be a pleasure. Given, therefore, that it was desired to remember lists of words, whether categories of names or correct forms of prayer, the repetition would be a labour of love, and to draw figures as aids to recollection would be very natural.

Nevertheless, the signs themselves have no doubt a history, which as such, even apart from interpretation, may prove to be signposts in our search for the origin of this mysterious people.

The Bird Cult

Knowledge of the tablets was confined to a few, and formed a comparatively small element of life in the island; the whole of social existence revolved round the bird cult, and it was the last of the old order to pass away. The main object of the cult was to obtain the first egg of a certain migratory sea-bird, and the rites were connected with the western headland, Rano Kao. Little has yet been said of this volcano, but, from the scenic point of view, it is the most striking portion of the island. Its height is 1,300 feet, and it possesses a crater two-thirds of a mile across, at the bottom of which is a lake largely covered with weeds and plant-life. On the eastward, or landward face, the mountain, as already explained, slopes downward with a smooth and grassy incline, and the other three sides have been worn by the waves into cliffs over 1,000 feet in height. On the outermost side the sea has nearly forced its way into the crater itself; and the ocean is now divided from the lake at this point by only a narrow edge, along which it would be possible but

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FIG. 103.

ORONGO, END ROCKS AND CARVED ROCKS

[facing p. 255]

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not easy to walk with safety. At some near date, as geological ages reckon, the island will have a magnificent harbour (figs. 100 and 108). Off this part of the coast are three little islets, outlying portions of the original mountain, which have as yet withstood the unceasing blows of the ocean. Their names are Motu Nui, Motu Iti, and Motu Kao-kao, and on them nest the sea-birds which have for unknown centuries played so important a part in the history of the island. On the mainland, immediately opposite these islets, there is on the top of the cliff a deserted stone village; it is known as Orongo, and in it the Islanders awaited the coming of the birds. It consists of nearly fifty dwellings arranged in two rows, both facing the sea, and partly overlapping; the lower row terminates just before the narrowest part of the crater wall is reached. The final houses are built among an outcrop of rocks; they are betwixt two groups of stones, and have in front of them a small natural pavement. The stones nearest the cliff look as if at any moment they might join their brethren in headlong descent to the shore below (fig. 103). Both the upstanding rocks and pavement are covered with carvings; some of them are partly obliterated by time, and can only be seen in a good light, but the ever-recurrent theme is a figure with the body of a man and the head of a bird; portions of the carvings are covered by the houses, and they therefore antedate them.

The whole position is marvellous, surpassing the wildest scenes depicted in romance. Immediately at hand are these strange relics of a mysterious past; on one side far beneath is the dark crater lake; on the other, a thousand feet below, swells and breaks the Pacific Ocean, it girdles the islets with a white belt of foam, and extends, in blue unbroken sweep, till it meets the ice-fields of the Antarctic. The all-pervading stillness of the island culminates here in a silence which may be felt, broken only by the cry of the sea-birds as they circle round their lonely habitations.

The stone village formed the scene of some of our earliest work during our first residence at the Manager's house; for some weeks, weather permitting, we rode daily up the mountain, an ascent which took about fifty minutes, and spent the day on the top studying the remains, and picking the brains of our native companions. Some of the houses have been destroyed in order

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FIG. 104.

CENTRAL PORTION OF ORONGO VILLAGE.

Left, house which contained image; centre, three houses opening on small quadrangle; right, canoe-shaped house with double entrance.

[facing p. 236]

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346 796 to obtain the painted slabs within, but most are in fair, and some in perfect, preservation. The form of construction suitable to the low ground has perhaps been tried here and abandoned, for some of the foundation-stones, pierced with the holes to support the superstructure of stick and grass, are built into the existing dwellings. The present buildings (fig. 104) are well adapted to such a wind-swept spot; they are made of stone laminæ, with walls about 6 feet thick; the inside walls are generally lined with vertical slabs, and horizontal slabs form the roof.

The greater number are built at the back into rising ground, and their sides and top are covered with earth; the natives call them not "haré," or houses, but "ana," or caves. Where space permits it, the form is boat-shaped, but some have been adapted to natural contours.[1] The dwellings vary in shape and size, from 52 feet by 6 feet to 8 feet by 4 feet; the height within varies from 4 feet to over 6 feet, but it is the exception to be able to stand upright. In some cases they open out of one another, and not unfrequently there is a hatch between two through which food could be passed. The doorway, with its six foot of passage, is just large enough to admit a man. (Into each of them, armed with ends of candles, we either crawled on hands and knees, or wriggled like serpents, according to our respective heights.) The slabs lining the wall, which are just opposite the doorway, and thus obtain a little light, are frequently painted; [532] some of them have bird and others native designs, but perhaps the most popular is a European ship, sometimes in full sail, and once with a sailor aloft in a red shirt (fig. 105). Inside the [352 513] houses we found the flat, sea-worn boulders which are used as pillows and often incised with rough designs; there were also a few obsidian spear heads, or mataa, and once or twice sphagnum from the crater, which was used for caulking boats, and also as [501 505] a sponge to retain fresh water when at sea. Outside many of the doors are small stone-lined holes, which we cleared out and examined. They measure roughly rather under 2 feet across by some 15 inches in depth. Our guides first told us that they were "ovens," but, as no ash was found, it seems probable that their second thoughts were right, and they were used to contain stores.

[1] An accurate large scale plan of the village was made by Lieutenant D. R. Ritchie, R.N., and every house was measured and described by the Expedition.

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The groups of dwellings have various names, and are associated with the particular clans, who, it is said, built them. One house, which stands near the centre of the village, Taura-renga by name, is particularly interesting as having been the dwelling of the statue Hoa-haka-nanaia, roughly to be translated as "Breaking wave," now resident under the portico of the British Museum (fig. 31). Lying about near by were two large stones, which had originally served as foundations for the thatched type of dwelling, but had apparently been converted into doorposts for the house of the image; on one of them a face had been roughly carved (fig. 107). The statue is not of Raraku stone, and it will be realised how entirely exceptional it is to find a statue under cover and in such a position. The back and face were painted white, with the "tracings" in red. The bottom contracts, and was embedded in the earth, though a stone suspiciously like a pedestal is built into a near wall. The house had to be broken down in order to get the figure out. According to the account of the missionaries, three hundred sailors and two hundred Kanakas were required to convey it down the mountain to H.M.S. *Topaze* in Cook's Bay. The memory of the incident is fast fading, but our friend Viriamo repeated in a quavering treble the song of the sailors as they hauled down their load.[1] The figure is some eight feet high and weighs about four tons.

Day by day, as we worked, we gazed down on the islets. The outermost, which, as its name Motu Nui signifies, is also the largest, is more particularly connected with the bird story, which we were gradually beginning to grasp, and at last the call to visit it could no longer be resisted (fig. 109). It was not an easy matter, for *Mana* was away; the boats of the natives left a good deal to be desired in the way of seaworthiness, and it was only possible to make the attempt on a fine day. Finally, on arrival at the island, it required not a little agility to jump on to a ledge of rocks at the second the boat rose on the crest of the waves, before it again sank on a boiling and surging sea till the heads of the crew were many feet below the landing-place. We

[1] Recollection is naturally clearer of the removal of the statue now at Washington, and particularly of the excellent food given to the natives who assisted. The figure is reported to have been taken from Ahu Apépé, an inland terrace not far from Rano Raraku, and been dragged down to the ship as she lay in La Pérouse Bay.

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managed, however, between us to get there three times in all. Once, when I was there without S., there was an anxious moment on re-embarking. No one quite knew what happened. Some of the crew said that the gunwale of the boat, as she rose on a wave, caught under an overhanging shelf of rock, others were of the opinion that the sudden weight of the last man, who at that moment leapt into the boat, upset her balance; anyway, this tale was very nearly never written. Once landed on the island, the surface is comparatively level and presents no difficulties; it is about five acres in extent, the greater part is covered with grass, and in every niche and cranny of the rock are sea-birds' nests. By a large bribe of tobacco one of the most active old men was induced to accompany us, and to point out the sites of interest. Later, we followed up the story at Raraku, and so little by little at many times, in divers places, and from various people was gathered the story of the bird cult which follows.

Not many sea-birds frequent this part of the Pacific, but on Motu Nui some seven species find an abiding-place. Some stay for the whole year, some come for the winter, and yet others for the summer. Among the last is a kind known to the natives as manu-tara[1]; it arrives in September, the spring of the southern hemisphere. The great object of life in Easter was to be the first to obtain one of the newly laid eggs of this bird. It was too solemn a matter for there to be any general scramble. Only those who belonged to the clan in the ascendancy for the time being could enter on the quest. Sometimes one group would keep it in their hands for years, or they might pass it on to a friendly clan. This selection gave rise, as might be expected, to burnings of hearts; the matter might be, and probably often was, settled by war. One year the Marama were inspired with jealousy because the Miru had chosen the Ngaure as their successors, and burnt down the house of Ngaara. This was, perhaps, the beginning of the fray when the old Ariki was carried off captive.

The fortunate clan, or clans, for sometimes several combined, left nothing to chance; in fact, as soon as one year's egg had been found, the incoming party made sure of their right of way by taking up their abode at the foot of Rano Kao—namely, at

[1] Sooty Tern.

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Mataveri. Here there were a number of the large huts with stone foundations; in these they resided, with their wives and families. One of our old gentlemen friends first saw the light in a Mataveri dwelling, when his people were in residence, or, to use the proper phraseology, when his clan were "the Ao."[1] This name "ao" is also given to a large paddle, as much as 6 feet in length, used principally, if not exclusively, in connection with bird rites and dancing at Mataveri. In some specimens a face is fully depicted on the handle; in others the features have degenerated to a raised line merely indicating the eyebrows and nose. There are pictures of it on slabs in the Orongo houses, in which the face is adorned with vertical stripes of red and white after the native manner, as described by the early voyagers (figs. 105 and 118).

Naturally the months passed at Mataveri were occupied by the residents in feasting as well as in dancing, and equally naturally the victims were human. It was to grace one of these gatherings, when the Ureohei were the Ao, that the mother of Hotu, the Miru, was slain in a way which he considered outraged the decencies of life, and it was in revenge for another Mataveri victim that the last statues were thrown down. It is told that the destined provender for one meal evaded that fate by hiding in the extreme end of a hut, which was so long and dark that she was never found. Some of these repasts took place in a cave in the sea-cliff near at hand. Here the ocean has made great caverns in a wall of lava, into which the waves surge and break with booming noise and dashing spray. The recess which formed the banqueting-hall is just above high-water mark, and is known as "Ana Kai-tangata," or Eat-man Cave (fig. 102). The roof is adorned with pictures of birds in red and white; one of these birds is drawn over a sketch of a European ship, showing that they are not of very ancient date (fig. 103).

When July approached, the company, or some of them, wound their way up the western side of the hill, along the ever-narrowing summit to the village of Orongo; the path can just be traced in certain lights, and is known as the "Road of the Ao." They spent their time while awaiting the birds in dancing each day in front of the houses; food was brought up by the women, [535]

of whom Viriamo was one.

[1] The men of the ascendant clan are also often spoken of as the Mata-tôa, or warriors, the other clans being the Mata-kio, or servants.

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of whom Viriamo was one. The group of houses at the end among the carved rocks was taboo during the festival, for they were inhabited by the rongo-rongo men, the western half being apportioned to the experts from Hotu Iti, the eastern to those from Kotuu. "They chanted all day; they stopped an hour to eat, that was all." They came at the command of Ngaara, but it is noteworthy that he himself never appeared at Orongo, though he sometimes paid a friendly call at Mataveri.

A short way down the cliff immediately below Orongo is a cave known as "Haka-rongo-manu," or "listening for the birds"; here men kept watch day and night for news from the islet below. The privilege of obtaining the first egg was a matter of competition between members of the Ao, but the right to be one of the competitors was secured only by supernatural means. An "ivi-atua," a divinely gifted individual, of the kind who had the gift of prophecy, dreamed that a certain man was favoured by the gods, so that if he entered for the race he would be a winner, or, in technical parlance, become a bird-man, or "tangata-manu." The victor, on being successful, was ordered to take a new name, which formed part of the revelation, and this bird-name was given to the year in which victory was achieved, thus forming an easily remembered system of chronology. The nomination might be taken up at once or not for many years; if not used by the original nominee, it might descend to his son or grandson. If a man did not win, he might try again, or say that "the ivi-atua was a liar," and retire from the contest. Women were never nominated, but the ivi-atua might be male or female, and, needless to say, was rewarded with presents of food. There were four "gods" connected with the eggs—Hawa-tuu-také-také, who was "chief of the eggs," and Maké-maké, both of whom were males; there were also two females, Vie Hoa, the wife of Hawa, and Vie Kenatea. Each of these four had a servant, whose names were given, and who were also supernatural beings. Those going to take the eggs recited the names of the gods before meat, inviting them to partake.

The actual competitors were men of importance, and spent their time with the remainder of the Ao in the stone houses of the village of Orongo; they selected servants to represent them and await the coming of the birds in less comfortable quarters in the islet below. These men, who were known as

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"hopu," went to the islet when the Ao went up to Orongo, or possibly rather later. Each made up his provisions into a "pora," or securely bound bundle of reeds; he then swam on the top of the packet, holding it with one arm and propelling himself with the remaining arm and both legs. An incantation, which was recited to us, was said by him before starting. In one instance, the ivi-atua, at the same time that he gave the nomination, prophesied that the year that it was taken up a man should be eaten by a large fish. The original recipient never availed himself of it, but on his death-bed told his son of the prophecy. The son, Kilimuti, undeterred by it, entered for the race and sent two men to the islet; one of them started to swim there with his pora, but was never heard of again, and it was naturally said that the prophecy had been fulfilled. Kilimuti wasted no regret over the misfortune, obtained another servant, and secured the egg; he died while the Expedition was on the island.

The hopu lived together in a large cave of which the entrance is nearly concealed by grass. The inside, however, is light and airy; it measures 19 feet by 13, with a height of over 5 feet, and conspicuous among other carvings in the centre of the wall is a large ao more than 7 feet in length. A line dividing the islet between Kotuu and Hotu Iti passed through the centre of the cave, and also through another cave nearer the edge of the islet; in this latter there was at one time a statue about 2 feet high known as Titahanga-o-te-henua, or The Boundary of the Land.[1] As bad weather might prevent fresh consignments of food during the weeks of waiting, the men carefully dried on the rocks the skins of the bananas and potatoes which they had brought with them, to be consumed in case of necessity. It was added with a touch appreciated by those acquainted with Easter Island, that, if the man who thus practised foresight was not careful, others who had no food would steal it when he was not looking.

The approach of the manu-tara can be heard for miles, for their cry is their marked peculiarity, and the noise during nesting is said to be deafening; one incised drawing of the bird shows

[1] This statue was removed to the mainland shortly before our arrival, and we were able to procure it in exchange for one of the yacht blankets. It is now at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford (fig. 111).

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it with open beak, from which a series of lines spreads out fan-wise, obviously representing the volume of sound; names in imitation of these sounds were given to children, such as "Piruru," "Wero-wero," "Ka-ara-ara." It is worth noting that the coming of the tara inaugurates the deep-sea fishing season; till their arrival all fish living in twenty or thirty fathoms were considered poisonous. The birds on first alighting tarried only a short time; immediately on their departure the hopu rushed out to find the egg, or, according to another account, the rushing out of the hopu frightened away the birds. The gods intervened in the hunt, so that the man who was not destined to win went past the egg even when it lay right in his path. The first finder rushed up to the highest point of the islet, calling to his employer by his new name, "Shave your head, you have got the egg." The cry was taken up by the watchers in the cave on the mainland, and the fortunate victor, beside himself with joy, proceeded to shave his head and paint it red, while the losers showed their grief by cutting themselves with mataa.

The defeated hopu started at once to swim from the island to the shore, while the winner, who was obliged to fast while the egg was in his possession, put it in a little basket, and, going down to the landing-rock, dipped it into the sea. One meaning of the word hopu is "wash." He then tied the basket round his forehead and was able to swim quickly, as the gods were with him. At this stage sometimes accidents occurred, for if the sea was rough, an unlucky swimmer might be dashed on the rocks and killed. In one instance, it was said, only one man escaped with his life, owing, as he reported, to his having been warned by Maké-maké not to make the attempt. When the hopu arrived on the mainland, he handed over the egg to his employer, and a tangata-rongo-rongo tied round the arm which had taken it a fragment of red tapa and also a piece of the tree known as "ngau-ngau," reciting meanwhile the appropriate words. The finding was announced by a fire being lit on the landward side of the summit of Rano Kao on one of two sites, according to whether the Ao came from the west or east side of the island.

It will be remembered that on the rocks which terminate the settlement of Orongo the most numerous of the carvings is the figure of a man with the head of a bird; it is in a crouching

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attitude with the hands held up, and is carved at every size and angle according to the surface of the rock (fig. 110). It can still be counted one hundred and eleven times, and many specimens must have disappeared: all knowledge of its meaning is lost. The figure may have represented one of the egg gods, but it seems more probable that each one was a memorial to a bird-man; and this presumption is strengthened by the fact that in at least three of the carvings the hand is holding an egg (fig. 112). The history of another figure, a small design which is also very frequent, still survives and corroborates this by analogy; within living memory it was the custom for women of the island to come up here and be immortalised by having one of these small figures ("Ko Mari") cut on the rock by a professional expert. We know, therefore, that conventional forms were used as memorials of certain definite persons.[1]

The bird-man, having obtained the egg, took it in his hand palm upwards, resting it on a piece of tapa, and danced with a rejoicing company down the slope of Rano Kao and along the south coast, a procedure which is known as "haka epa," or "make shelf," from the position of the hand with regard to the egg. If, however, the winner belonged to the western clans, he generally went to Anakena for the next stage, very possibly because, as was explained, he was afraid to go to Hotu Iti; some victors also went to special houses in their own district, otherwise the company went along the southern shore till they reached Rano Raraku.

Amongst the statues standing on its exterior slope, there is shown at the south-west corner the foundations of a house (no. 7, fig. 60). This is the point which would first be approached from the southern coast, and here the bird-man remained for a year, five months of which were spent in strict taboo. The egg, which was still kept on tapa, was hung up inside the house and blown on the third day, a morsel of tapa being put inside. The victor did not wash, and spent his time in "sleeping all day, only coming out to sit in the shade." His correct head-dress was a crown made of human hair; it was known as "hau oho,"

[1] The figures of the bird-man, also of the ao and Ko Mari, are all roughly carved on the back of the Orongo statue (fig. 106). They appear, like those on the Raraku image, to be later workmanship than the raised ring and girdle. Permission to inspect can be obtained in the hall of the British Museum; unfortunately the light in the portico is bad.

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and if it was not worn the aku-aku would be angry. The house was divided into two, the other half being occupied by a man who was called an ivi-atua, but was of an inferior type to the one gifted with prophecy, and apparently merely a poor relation of the hero; there were two cooking-places, as even he might not share that of the bird-man. Food was brought as gifts, especially the first sugar-cane, and these offerings seem to have been the sole practical advantage of victory; those who did not contribute were apt to have their houses burnt. The bird-man's wife came to Raraku, but dwelt apart, as for the first five months she could not enter her husband's house, nor he hers, on pain of death. A few yards below the bird-man's house is the ahu alluded to on p. 191 (fig. 60); it consists merely of a low rough wall built into the mountain, the ground above it being levelled and paved. It was reserved for the burial of bird-men; they were the uncanny persons whose ghosts might do unpleasant things—they were safer hidden under stones. The name Orohié is given to the whole of this corner of the mountain, with its houses, its ahu, and its statues. To this point the figures led which were round the base of the hill. If they were re-erected, they would stand with their backs not to the mountain, but to Orohié.[1] As the bird-man gazed lazily forth from the shade of his house, above him were the quarries with their unfinished work, below him were the bones of his dead predecessors, while on every hand giant images stood for ever in stolid calm. It is difficult to escape from the question, Were the statues on the mountain those of bird-men?

The hopu also retired into private life; if he were of the Ao, he could come to Orohié, but he might, if he wished, reside in his own house, which was in that case divided by a partition through which food was passed; it might not be eaten with his right hand, as that had taken the egg. His wife and children were also kept in seclusion and forbidden to associate with others.

The new Ao had meanwhile taken up their abode at Mataveri. From here a few weeks after their arrival they went formally to Motu Nui to obtain the young manu-tara, known from their cry as "piu." After the brief visit of the birds when the first egg was laid, they absented themselves from the islet for a period varyingly reported as from three days to a month. On their

[1] Nos. 1, 2, and 3, fig. 60, form part of this series. See also fig. 74.

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return they laid plentifully, and, as soon as the nestlings were hatched, the men of the celebrating clan carried them to the mainland, swimming with them in baskets bound round the forehead after the manner of the first egg. They were then taken in procession round the island, or, according to another account, only as far as Orohié. It was not until the piu had been obtained that it was permissible to eat the eggs, and they were then consumed by the subservient clans only, not by the Ao. The first two or three eggs, it was explained, were "given to God"; to eat them would prove fatal. Some of the young manu tara were kept in confinement till they were full grown, when a piece of red tapa was tied round the wing and leg, and they were told, "Kaho ki te hiva," "Go to the world outside." There was no objection to eating the young birds. The tara departed from Motu Nui about March, but a few stragglers remained; we saw one bird and obtained eggs at the beginning of July, but the natives failed to get any for us in August. When in the following spring the new bird-man had achieved his egg, he brought it to Orohié and was given the old one, which he buried in a gourd in a cranny of Rano Raraku; sometimes, however, it was thrown into the sea, or kept and buried with its original owner. The new man then took the place of his predecessor, who returned to ordinary life.

The last year that the Ao went to Orongo, which is known as "Rokunga," appears to have been 1866 or 1867. The names of twelve subsequent years are given, during which the competition for the egg continued, and it was still taken to be interred at Raraku. The cult thus survived in a mutilated form the conversion of the island to Christianity, which was completed in 1868; it is said that once the missionaries saw the Ao dancing with the egg outside their door in Hanga Roa and "told the people it was the Devil." It must have been celebrated even after the assembly of the remains of the clans into one place, which occurred about the same time, but it was finally crushed by the secular exploiters of the island, whose house at Mataveri, that of the present manager, rests on the foundation-stones of the cannibal habitation (fig. 25). The cult admittedly degenerated in later years. A new practice arose of having more than one bird-man, with other innovations. The request to be given the names of as many bird-years as could be remembered

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796 177 met with an almost embarrassing response, eighty-six being quoted straight away; some of these may be the official names of bird-men and not represent a year, but they probably do so in most cases; chronological sequence was achieved with fair certainty for eleven years prior to the final celebration at Orongo. In addition to the bird-name, the names of both winner and hopu were ascertained, with those of their respective clans.

[124] FIG. 113. Porotu acted as a hopu. He refused to be photographed, and the sketch was surreptitiously made, whilst obtaining the account of his official experiences. He also assisted in carrying the remains of Ko Tori (p. 225).

TAKÉ AND MANU

684 Two other ceremonies were mentioned in connection with Orongo and Motu Nui, but to obtain detailed information was very difficult. It finally transpired that of "také" no first-hand knowledge existed, as the rites had been abandoned thirty years before the coming of the missionaries. All that can be safely said is that those concerned went into retreat on Motu Nui, living, it was stated, in the cave where the hopu awaited the birds; the period was generally given as three months. A vigorous discussion took place on the subject between Viriamo and Jotefa, the oldest man in the village, seated on a log in the garden of the old lady. She was positive, in agreement with other authorities, that také was for children—"the boys and girls went in a canoe to the island"; he firmly adhered to the statement that his father went for také, after he, the son, was born. Tomenika stated that